

# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

## *Disabled Persons Protection Commission*

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50 Ross Way, Quincy, MA 02169 • Hotline: (800) 426-9009 (V/TTY)  
Phone: (617) 727-6465 (V/TTY), (800) 245-0062 (V/TTY), FAX: (617) 727-6469

## **RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE AGAINST PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR PROVIDERS**

**REMEMBER** Victims most often disclose to someone they trust

**IF THIS IS YOU.....**

- Stay calm and remain non-judgmental
- Be supportive and ensure the individual's safety
- Explain the requirement to immediately report to DPPC
- Listen closely if the victim wants to talk
- Do gather essential information, by asking:
  - What happened?** - Only enough to establish that abuse or a crime has occurred
  - Where did it happen?** - Important to know for notifying appropriate police department
  - When did it happen?** - If within 120 hours of sexual assault, go to an emergency room for a sexual assault exam
  - Who is alleged abuser?** – If appropriate, ask obvious questions of the alleged abuser about what happened
- Gather and document basic information on the alleged victim and alleged abuser
- If possible, collect relevant logs, schedules, and correspondence etc.
- Prevent loss or destruction of known evidence
- Contain & control the situation
  - Ensure allegations are not repeated to others
  - Speak directly with the original source of the report
  - Ensure all contact with the alleged abuser/suspect is by one person

#### **DO NOT:**

- Try to conduct an investigation
- Re-interview the individual
- Interpret or edit the information
- Interrogate the alleged abuser/suspect
- Involve other persons
- Interview other individuals or staff
- Go looking for evidence
- Touch physical evidence

**In an Emergency, Call 911**

**Report abuse and neglect to the DPPC Hotline  
1-800-426-9009 V/TTY**